THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) According to available information, there are 386 Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails, all of whom were arrested between September, 2005 and February, 2006.

(c) to (f) During the India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary level talks held on December 27-28, 2004, it was agreed that immediate notification would be provided to the respective High Commissions through the Foreign Ministries of the arrested Indian/Pakistani nationals, consular access would be given within three months from the date of their arrest and repatriation would be done immediately after completion of sentence and nationality verification. India and Pakistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on October 03, 2005 at Islamabad which provides for establishment of a communication link between Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA). The MoU, *inter alia,* provides for reporting of EEZ violations, exchange of information about apprehended vessels and coordination of return passages. The MoU will come into effect after ratification by both the Governments which is under process.

India and Sri Lanka have an Understanding on humane treatment and early release of fishermen which has been reiterated during the visit of Sri Lankan President to India in November, 2004 and subsequent high level contacts. A Joint Working Group (JWG) on fisheries has also been established which held its first meeting in April, 2005 and would pursue cooperation in fisheries sector.

With other neighbouring countries, the problems pertaining to arrest of Indian fishermen are very few. Whenever such cases arise, the matter is taken up with the Governments concerned through diplomatic channels for early release of the Indian fishermen.

Civil Nuclear Co-operation with USA

428. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported statement of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that India has made "some difficult choices to secure approval of the civil-nuclear co-operation

and move forward" and by adding without elaborating that "some steps would have to be taken to satisfy the concerns of the US Congress";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether Government propose to obtain consensus on this issue by full discussion in Parliament during current session?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Government has seen the remarks made by US Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice.

(b) Government is cognizant of fact that US Government would require approval of the US Congress to amend its laws suitably to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India. Hearings on this issue have been held in the US Congress, where US Government officials have made their presentations. US Government has explained the rationale behind the understanding on cooperation in civil nuclear energy with India, including its importance for strategic partnership with India. Government is confident that US Government would continue to address the concerns of the US Congress.

(c) The Government is committed to take the Parliament in confidence, as was reflected in Prime Minister's *suo moto* statement in Parliament on 29 July, 2005. The debate that followed in both the Houses of Parliament provided an occasion to discuss and clarify the issues involved in the civil nuclear understanding. The Government remains committed to keep the Parliament informed. Prime Minister in his Press Conference on 1 February, 2006 has stressed on the need for national consensus on this issue.

Visit of American Senator

429. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether American Senator John Kerry visited India and held talks with P.M. on bilateral issues, recently;

(b) if so, the details of issues discussed between both of them;

(c) the outcome thereof;